

April 3, 2012

To: FAA Inspector Hector Diaz

From: Mark Harris  
[REDACTED]

Re: Accident N415BA

### Statement from Mark Harris

On April 1st 2012 at 7:15am, my wife (Amy Harris) and I arrived at the airfield for my introductory ride in a powered parachute. We were about 15 minutes early and Craig was charging the battery and restoring the connections as he stated the aircraft had been at Sun and Fun for the weekend. While he was doing this he was explaining the various aspects of powered parachuting and how easy it is to control and fly, as well as how safe it is- if the engine quits you have a large parachute to glide you down.

As Craig was finishing preparing the aircraft for flight my wife mentioned she wanted to video us taking off and asked where the best vantage point would be. He stated that along the east tree line would be best as we would taxi toward the tree line and take off down the grass strip. I want to make it very clear that it was not ever mentioned that we would take off directly at the tree line. Obviously, as a pilot myself, if I would have known that was Craig's intention I would have voiced my objection and canceled the flight. However, there was a grass strip with clear path to flight so it would have never entered my mind to question the takeoff path.

At approximately 7:45am, we started our taxi as he said he would, towards my wife and the tree line, it immediately became clear that this now was going to be the takeoff path as we became airborne prior to the grass strip. At this point I still thought that he would turn right down the grass strip as we climbed out. Instead, he continued on the path towards the tree line.

Once we reached the top of the tree line we started breaking through the tops of the trees, the engine quit, and we were hung up in the tops of the trees for a brief moment. The branches gave way and we fell through the trees (appx 40-50 ft) to the ground with a brutal impact.

911 was called, I was removed from the aircraft, stabilized and transported in a ambulance to the nearest hospital in Plant City. Then moved to the Trauma Center in St Joseph's Hospital in Tampa. I suffered a fractured scapula, a neo thorax, and a broken T5 and T6 transverse.

[REDACTED]  
Mark Harris